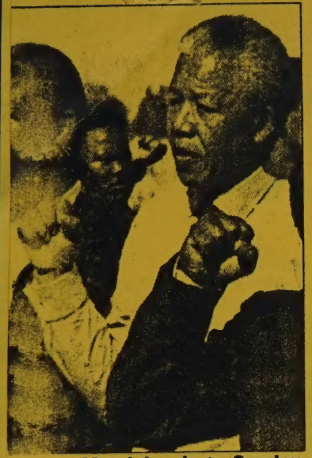
Associated Press



…son Mandela sings Sunday … a rally in Bolpatong, South …ica. Thirty-nine people were …lled in an attack Wednesday in the township.

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…nny today, with a high of 80. …udy tonight, with a low of 54./A2

Proud paraders

Participants in the Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade prepare for a march down Cascade Avenue, beginning at Cascade's intersection with Cache La Poudre Street and ending at Acacia Park, where a rally was held. Part of the focus of Sunday's festivities was Amendment 2, a November ballot issue that opposes civil rights protection for homosexuals. Complete report/B1

Gay rights pit pastor against pastor

Local church leaders interpret Bible's message differently

By **Anne Windishar**/Gazette Telegraph

If Jesus Christ were registered to vote in Colorado, would he support the proposed ballot issue prohibiting laws that give civil rights protection to homosexuals?

Pastor Bernhard Kuiper says yes. The leader of Village Seven Presbyterian Church believes the Bible makes it clear that homosexuality is a sin; passing legislation protecting it would be against God's teaching.

But the Rev. Harvey Martz from Calvary United Methodist Church disagrees: Jesus, a man who healed lepers and pardoned prostitutes, would reach out to homosexuals as the outcasts of modern time.

Churches are bitterly torn on the issue of homosexuality. But many Colorado Springs pastors agree on one thing: religion will have a strong influence on the outcome of Amendment 2, which opposes civil rights protection for gays and lesbians, in November.

Because the amendment's sponsor, Colorado for Family Values, has ties to fundamentalist groups, it was assumed that the Colorado Springs group would have the support of churches. In fact, many of the 85,000 signatures gathered to get the issue on the ballot came from voters who were lobbied at church.

But some Colorado Springs pastors bristle at the mention of the amendment; they refused to circulate petitions this spring and have talked with their congregations about opposing the initiative.

Three regional church groups have formally come out against it. The Rocky Mountain chapters of the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America — representing more than 100,000 members in the mountain states — approved statements earlier this month against Amendment 2.

And Rabbi Steven Foster from Temple Emanuel in Denver is one of the more visible critics of the amendment.

Other denominations, including the Catholic Church, are considering voicing their opinions later this summer.

"To write discrimination into our constitution against any group of people is wrong," said First Congregational Church pastor James White, who voted with the United Church of Christ to oppose the amendment.

"Our Lord was accepting of all people. The man who welcomed lepers couldn't possibly discriminate toward gay and lesbian persons."

Colorado for Family Values has its

See **GAY RIGHTS**/A11

REV. HARVEY MARTZ

"It disturbs me to see Christian leaders turning their backs on or condemning people who are different. It's ironic and tragic that they're doing exactly what Jesus refused to do."

PASTOR BERNHARD KUIPER

Photos by **Smiley N. Pool**/Gazette Telegraph

"If you believe the Bible, homosexuality is a very grievous sin against God and nature. It's contrary to everything God intended."

Gay rights/Amendment 2 debated

From A1

share of church support, the group's leaders say, but so far only individual ministers have endorsed the amendment. Even with that support, CFV co-founder Tony Marco disagrees with ministers who think religion has a place in the debate.

CFV's campaign, Marco said, is based on the argument that chosen sexual lifestyles shouldn't be legally protected the same way race, gender and age are. Yet members of the group's board of directors — including University of Colorado football coach Bill McCartney and former U.S. Sen. Bill Armstrong — have said homosexuality is an affront to morality.

Marco, though, sticks to the civil rights line. "CFV will take support and votes from groups of all kinds, but we believe our civil rights stance is sound constitutionally and completely ethical," he said. "We don't believe we need to address the moral issue."

Several local pastors who subscribe to the CFV opinion are also taking the civil rights approach.

"It isn't hatred (of homosexuals) at all," said the Rev. Ted Haggard, pastor at New Life Church. "I'm not interested in anyone or any group ever being denied their legitimate civil rights. But a great cornerstone of our democracy is responsibility for personal choices."

Other ministers are just as concerned with civil rights, but they approach Amendment 2 with a different bent. They see it as an effort to deny homosexuals legal recourse from discrimination.

Part of the civil rights debate centers on whether homosexuals are currently protected by state and federal law. Proponents of Amendment 2 say they are, but critics and at least one constitutional scholar say Colorado homosexuals can be kicked out of apartments or lose jobs simply because of their lifestyle.

The Equal Protection Campaign, a Denver-based group that opposes the amendment, would rather deal with the civil rights issue than become steeped in an ethical debate about whether homosexuality is a choice or a sin.

But in a church, that's often unavoidable. Kuiper of Village Seven Presbyterian points to the biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah, which for many churchgoers represents God's wrath against homosexuals.

Homosexuality also is mentioned throughout the Old Testament on lists of "abominations" against God, Kuiper said.

"If you believe the Bible, homosexuality is a very grievous sin against God and nature," he said. "It's contrary to everything God intended."

But Martz said that the Old Testament's view of homosexuals is out of context with the modern-day political debate over legal rights for homosexuals. The lists of so-called abominations in the Old Testament contain many things: lying, adultery — but also eating crab, gossiping and women wearing men's clothing.

"That's puts 'abominations' into a whole different context," Martz said. "To use that word makes homosexuality really sound horrible until you look at the things that were part of the code of behavior 3,500 years ago."

Many religious leaders prefer to look at Christ's lessons in the relatively modern New Testament, which Martz calls the heart of the Bible. Jesus never mentions homosexuality, he said. Instead, his teachings center on fairness and justice for all.

Martz said religious leaders who condemn homosexuals would do well to revisit those readings.

"Some of the harshest words in the Bible were those that Jesus had for the religious leaders of his day," Martz said. In fact, in the book of Matthew, Jesus reviles religious leaders, calling them hypocrites and urging them to be most concerned with justice, mercy and faith.

"It disturbs me to see Christian leaders turning their backs on or condemning people who are different," Martz said. "It's ironic and tragic that they're doing exactly what Jesus refused to do."

MILITARY

Feathered mer of Swiss milita mark anniversa

Deutsche Presse Agentur

BERNE, Switzerland — Swiss arm famous the world over. There is eve issue Swiss army bicycle. But few pe heard of the Swiss army carrier-pige whose 75th anniversary was marked weekend.

Top army brass were on hand at t dovecote at Schoenbuehl north of Be ruffled strutting, not to mention a go of billing and cooing.

The feathered personnel, preened t for the event, cocked their heads inqu civilian visitors during the two-day o

Other countries have long since dis carrier-pigeon units in favor of more means of communication. France was last to do so, recently dropping a nati pigeon-breeder registration system th to a kind of military conscription appa the birds.

But the tradition-conscious Swiss m which provides nuclear fallout shelter man, woman and child, is reluctant to faith in fallible telecommunications. A reaching plan for military funding incl item for pigeons through the end of the

Technically, Swiss carrier pigeons a to military communications forces of t army. There are about 7,000 birds in a vice. In time of national emergency, an 30,000 can be called up from breeders, receive duty compensation for their bir

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